474 313 the bulk marketing and better bargaining power of the cooperative. In 1941 it was claimed that a considerable number of the individuals working in the woods had signed up, as well as some men in the town who wished to indicate their support of the idea although not themselves forest workers.

474 Two things were said to be holding up the completion of the organization of the cooperative. The first was the necessity of raising enough capital to pay advances to the members when they deposited their products with the cooperative for marketing. The second was the refusal of the *representante* to sign the necessary papers. According to Velásquez, this refusal was not because the *representante* disapproved of the idea, but because he felt many people in town were opposed and he did not wish to sign the papers counter to their wishes. As the signature of the *representante* was not absolutely essential, the organization probably was completed without his approval.

It may be noted that the cooperative had nearly come to grief in its early days through an action by the *presidente militar* imposed after the 1937 *zafarrancho*. The military governor had ordered posts cut for the installation of the electric lighting system without securing a permit from the Department of Forestry. The Forestry officials had blamed [687] this on the cooperative, levied a thousand peso fine, and threatened to revoke the permit of the organization. This had been cleared up, and it was rumored that the former military governor was going to have to pay the fine—which may very much be doubted.

575 794 518 668 A number of other organizations of a religious nature exist and will be dealt with later. Potentially most influential in political matters are the church societies such as those of the Sacred Heart, the Third Order of Saint Francis, and others. In Cherán in 1940, it was difficult to learn much about these. The meetings were private, and secrecy had been impressed on the members. There is very little doubt that a new priest who took over the parish late in 1940 was utilizing these organizations to undermine the existing liberal political order in Cherán. Trouble was brewing in Cherán on the religious and political front and there is little doubt that it was being con-

1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34

sciously fostered by some elements in the Church, probably the same groups fostering the Sinarquista movement in the adjoining region of the Bajío north of Tarascan territory.[32] Additional data on the change in attitude of the church in Cherán will be presented under religion.

CONFLICT AND LAW

The people of Cherán are very reticent about conflicts within the town. Efforts are made to convince the outsider that the town is a harmonious unit, and it is very difficult to secure data to the contrary. The impression, after many months in Cherán, is that a great deal of hostility underlies the apparent harmony. In part, this is apparent in the prevalence of witchcraft and some of the evidence is presented under that heading. Interfamily and intrafamily jealousies and conflicts, however carefully concealed, cropped up time and again in casual remarks. Nevertheless, little definite information could be secured. Any efforts to pick up the small leads occurring in conversation were usually adroitly countered. Consequently, the material presented in this section consists primarily of the more overt conflicts which, under certain circumstances, lead to official interference.

A great variety of minor conflicts constantly reach the office of the mayor. Many of these never pass the stage of discussion and informal settlement. For example, a man had been drunk all week, insulting people indiscriminately. One man finally struck the drunkard. The case was discussed at length. Some argued that the drunkard should be arrested. Others claimed that both should be arrested. Ultimately, nothing was done, but as anyone present in the *municipio* could enter the discussion, word probably got around to both parties. The drunkard's relatives probably restrained him and the man giving the blows kept out of sight.

Another case illustrates the handling of minor offenses. A woman was brought before the acting mayor (the mayor's alternate), charged with stealing a blanket from a man while he was drunk. The woman was accused vigorously by the acting mayor but denied the

[32] Evidence for this statement cannot be given at this time.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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[P. 6 contains no text]

1

INTRODUCTION

131 The Tarascans are one of the principal Indian groups on the central plateau of [161] Mexico, numbering around 55,000 in 1940. They occupy the central region of the State of Michoacan, mainly in the Lake Pátzcuaro area and the Sierra west of it. 621 They live in sixty-six villages *(pueblos)*[1] and a number of dependent hamlets [101] *(ranchos)* amidst similar settlements of mestizo Spanish-speaking people.[2]

171 Except for language, the differences be-
178 tween the Tarascans and the nearby rural mestizos are not very great from either the cultural or any other point of view. Four centuries of living together with and under people of European culture (Spanish colonial or modern Mexican) have made the Tarascans considerably interdependent with Mexican national life, and their culture, if analyzed in traits and institutions, might show more of a Spanish than an Indian heritage. The loss of Tarascan speech and consciousness is only one more step in the process of greater integration and acculturation into the Mexican nation, and many of the mestizo villages near the Tarascans have undergone this transformation only recently.

This interrelation with the rest of the nation is seen not only in the content of their culture but also in their participation in the social and political conflicts of Mexico.

● 668 National issues which have agitated Mexico in later years have their local manifestation in Tarascan towns. Conflicts around land and church rage in many Tarascan villages.

While the basic issues of landownership arise out of local conditions, the local groups fighting those issues are connected with national political groups. *Agraristas* (peasants claiming or receiving lands under the agrarian laws emanating from the Revolution) are found in many villages. Lately the Catholic nationalistic movement of the *sinarquistas* has found strong support among the Tarascans. Their different allegiances make for opposition or [60] support of the national and state governments and local agencies, influencing the

1. The terms village and town are used indistinctively throughout this paper to translate the Spanish *pueblo*.
2 West, 1948, 1.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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I

INTRODUCTION

attitude of the people toward government officials and toward strangers in general.

The political struggle today has a strong religious tinge, for or against the Church, and local religious institutions are involved. While the traditional system of organizing cult festivals is somewhat in decadence, the Catholic church is strongly supported by the sinarquistas. The government anti-religious policy on the other hand is associated with the agraristas.

The ethnologist approaching a Tarascan town becomes aware of these conflicts on his very first attempt at contact with the people. He confronts the problem of being classified politically and having to define his attitude. This has made work difficult or even impossible in some cases.

The problem, then, of integrating the phenomena studied in Tarascan villages to the wider phenomena of national Mexican culture and society becomes imperative for any meaningful discussion of culture change among these people.

The concept of folk culture as something different from national culture, yet related to it, seems to be the best conceptual tool with which to handle problems arising from the relation between a given local community and the nation as a whole.[3]

Anthropologists studying modern Indian cultures of Mexico have followed the so-called community approach. They have selected one town and have studied the culture of that particular settlement as a self-contained unit. This approach, although useful and necessary, has to be supplemented by relating the local manifestations to the national processes of which they are only part.

The nation can be considered the primary culture carrying unit in our Western civilization. Within the nation, people are divided into local communities determined by common residence (abstraction being made of what determines common residence). Cutting across local communities, other segments of society are not defined by common residence of their members but by some other factor such as property

3. The author experienced the need for this approach while working in the field, but his theoretical approach to this problem took shape in Dr. Julian Steward's Seminar on Anthropology and Community Studies, at Columbia University.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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178 and the native elements incorporated into
771 the local Catholic cult made up an important part of the local folk culture of each community.

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171 That Michoacan followed the same general process as the rest of peasant Mexico is well attested in a number of sources. West's recent survey of the cultural geography of Michoacan includes colonial data on the economic aspects (population, agriculture, settlements, and handicrafts) which show that Michoacan developed along the same lines as the rest of Mexico.[19] These economic aspects will be considered further, for many still survive into modern times. The politico-religious organization of colonial times will be discussed later.

THE DECLINE OF THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

177 Together with the patterning of Indian
423 communities after Spanish townships, the Spaniards introduced into Mexico private
178 ownership of land. They acquired large estates *(haciendas)* which were worked with Negro or Indian labor and whose produce was primarily destined for the national or world market. These two types of land tenure, — communal property of village communities and private property of haciendas, — have been in conflict throughout the history of Mexico. This conflict began early in colonial times; it reached its climax with the almost complete destruction of the village communities at the end of the last century and the beginning of the present.

668 With Mexican independence began the
177 application of political and economic poli-
423 cies of liberalism, and greater decay of the village communities set in.

The Indians were no longer considered a special caste under a different system of law, but Mexican citizens with equal rights. Although Indian tribute was abolished, the Indians also lost the protections afforded by the *Leyes de Indias* to their autonomous government.[20] The most important blow to the Indian village community, though, was the loss of their economic foundation: communal ownership of land.

175 Three centuries after the Spanish con-
794 quest, the Church had become the largest landowner of the country. The fight for
423 abolishing ownership of land held in mort-
668 main by the church came to be the dominant fact in the nineteenth century history of Mexico.

19. West, 1948.
20. Chávez Orozco, 1943, ch. 4.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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175 423 668 [565] This fight turned out to be an attack on inalienable landed property in general, including the Indian communal lands. The purpose was to free those lands thus removed from commerce and throw them to the free play of the market, creating a class of small farmer-owners with a well developed idea of property which would make for social and economic progress.

175 668 423 The abolition of landownership by civil and ecclesiastical corporations was first written into law in 1856 and incorporated into the 1857 constitution during the period of Mexican history known as the *Reforma*.[21] The enforcement of these measures, in so far as they concerned the lands of Indian towns, was usually delayed until the end of the nineteenth century.[22]

175 423 648 [471] The Indians' communal lands were allotted as private property among the villagers. Once the property title was in individual hands, with the possibility of being sold to anybody, outsiders found the way open to acquire land which, through communal land title, had formerly been reserved for the villagers. The greater economic power of the non-Indians, and frequently unfair practices, allowed them to acquire a great amount of land from Indian villages. The concentration of land in haciendas and the impoverishment of the villages were thus facilitated. This process was accelerated during the Porfirio Díaz regime (1877-1911) because of the general economic progress of that period. The inflow of capital, building of railroads, development of mining and other industries, also led to a rise of land values and an increase of capital seeking to invest in land.[23]

* * *

175 423 668 648 In summary, after the reforms of the end of the nineteenth century, the haciendas grew enormously at the expense of the formerly communal land of the village communities or of land allotted to individual Indians who were not able to keep possession. On the other hand, the remaining village communities changed from units of peasant joint owners to rural aggregates of individual farmer-owners.

The growth of the haciendas at the expense of the land-holding villages and the change within the villages from communal to private property represented the general national trend of change in rural Mexico,

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21. Phipps, 1925, 77.
22. Callcott, 1931, 139.
23. Phipps, 1925, Chs. 5, 6, 7; Molina Enriquez, 1909, 56-8.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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175 up to the Mexican Revolution of 1910. This
423 found its legal expression in the *Reforma*
668 and subsequent laws aimed at suppressing
648 communal property. The change, however, went at a different pace in different regions. Mexico, due to the diversity of its territory and population, is characterized by a very unequal development of its various regions, thus allowing different types of society and culture to live together even if connected and coordinated into a single nation. The political and legal changes of the late nineteenth century represent only the turning point at which this general trend of change became the dominant political issue and required expression in the nation's legal system.

175 In marginal regions, however, the land-
423 holding village, regardless of how many changes in its organization were required, survived and held its own against the haciendas, in the same way as haciendas had been the dominant type of economy in parts of Mexico at the time when communal ownership of villages was recognized and protected by law. Consequently, in discussing the development of a particular region like Michoacan, further inquiry is essential to determine to what extent and in what manner this national trend of change has taken place.

* * *

Private estates had been introduced into Michoacan by the Spaniards since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They began in northern Michoacan where the land was particularly suited for stock raising, and in the tierra caliente where they concentrated on cattle and sugar cane. This is the area where the hacienda type of economy predominated until the Revolution.

Information is available on the political-religious organization of Indian towns at the end of the eighteenth century (from around 1789) and will be discussed later (Chapter 3). In the economic scene, the impact of the haciendas on the holding villages was at that time already noticeable. Some of the haciendas, like La Guaracha in the Zamora area and those on the southern shore of Lake Pátzcuaro, which after the Revolution were subject to land reforms and which are today on the edge of Tarascan-speaking territory, were already in existence.

175 The villages in the northern and southern
464 areas had to supplement their native econ-
177 omy with work in neighboring haciendas. This seems to have been the main factor leading to the decline and final disappear-

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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175 ance of native speech in those areas, a pro-
464 cess which began in the late eighteenth
177 century and was greatly accelerated after Independence.

In central Michoacan, the Sierra and the
175 Lake areas (except the southern shore),
438 the land-holding villages predominated and were devoted mainly to agriculture and handicrafts.[24]

175 During the Profirio Díaz period, the ap-
668 plication of the Reforma Laws abolishing
423 communal property, and the economic development of the country brought about further growth of the haciendas.

In Tzintzuntzan, the formerly communal lands were distributed among the villagers, and individual titles had been given by 1885. Between 1885 and 1902, a large part of the best agricultural land and most of the communal, non-agricultural lands were sold, legally or otherwise, to outsiders who, with these lands, established haciendas.[25]

[311] In the swamp of Zacapu, a company was formed at the end of the century in order to reclaim swamp land. Thus, several haciendas were established in a swamp, which had been the property of the neighboring Indian towns. At least one of these haciendas seems to have managed to acquire further land from the village of Tarejero.[26]

175 In many towns, however, the Indians re-
423 sisted the operation of the Reforma laws during most of the nineteenth century.

In 1902, the state legislature passed a law
648 regarding the distribution of the property
656 of extinct Indian communities (*Ley y reglamento sobre reparto de bienes de las extinguidas communidades indígenas*, 18 de junio y 4 de julio 1902). It provided that the formerly communal land of the Indians could not be sold or mortgaged; that in order to distribute the land every town should appoint two representatives; that in case the state government did not approve of the town's choice of representatives it should appoint attorneys (*apoderados*); that the towns should entrust their land titles to the authorities; and that if the towns did not appoint representatives after a certain period of time the government would name the attorneys. In most cases it was the government which appointed the attorneys.

This procedure apparently was intended to keep the lands from being sold to non-Indians, but although the land of the villages was not sold outright, it was leased

24. West, 1948, 11-18.
25. Foster, 1948, 171-2.
26. Simpson, 1937, 464-8.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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178 and in some towns hat making has sur-
463 rendered to factory competition.[60]

Paracho, on the other hand, shows the
322 opposite picture. Here the manufacture of
178 wooden objects (bowls, vases, candlesticks,
chocolate beaters, chessmen, toys, etc.) has
[534] greatly increased in importance. The town
[439] also manufactures guitars for Mexico City
and Guadalajara buyers.[61] Santa Fe pot-
[323] tery has recently been selling to Mexico
City and even United States curio shops.[62]

The declining crafts are among those
178 producing basic necessities, while the
463 growing ones are luxury crafts depending
in part on the tourist market.

Both the disappearance and growth of handicrafts disrupt the economic independence of the village, for they produce an increased dependence on the national market either in selling the developed manufactures or buying what formerly was produced locally. As in the land situation, however, the older order is preserved to a significant extent. Handicrafts for the local market are still the main economic activity of many villages: pottery, shawls, belts, agave fiber bags and sacks, hats, mats, baskets, metates, furniture still provide the livelihood of many Tarascans.[63]

No matter how important handicrafts
423 may be for the economy of a given village,
578 land tenure is the factor which has produced the conflicts during the revolutionary period. This holds true even for vil-
[438] lages predominantly devoted to handicrafts, like Tzintzuntzan (pottery) and Jarácuaro (hat making).

The conflicts which arose within the villages during the Revolution will presently be discussed.

The Mexican Revolution and the Tarascans

175 After the peaceful Porfirio Díaz period
(1877-1911), characterized by the economic
668 development of the country, a period of
423 unrest began in 1910. Under the term 'Mexican Revolution' are usually understood both the armed conflict from approximately 1910 to 1920 and the various governments and their policies from the beginning of the struggle down to the present time. The Mexican Revolution is thus a very complex social transformation which includes all aspects of Mexican life. I shall discuss only those aspects of the agrarian revolution and reforms which concern Tarascan developments. The lit-

60. Ibid., 66.
61. Ibid., 67, 68.
62. Ibid., 69.
63. Ibid., 56-71.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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175 erature on this subject is adequate,[64] so no
668 extensive background presentation will be
necessary here.

423 The agrarian revolution was an outcome of the concentration of land and the influence of capitalism on the countryside mentioned before in connection with the decay of village communities. It revolved around the fight against the haciendas.

The solution has been the breaking up of the haciendas and the granting of land to the landless under a new type of tenure known as *ejido*.[65] In ejido, lands are given to the community of *ejidatarios* (ejido members), who have the right to use the lands but not to alienate them, ultimate ownership resting in the nation. An agri-
[453] cultural Bank of Ejido Credit was set up in order to finance the exploitation of ejidos.

This change is the end result of many conflicting interests and opposing tendencies which have produced a very complex development. The more militant peasant groups (Villa and Zapata) were crushed by force of arms, and only afterwards were the land reforms of any sizable importance. These reforms, begun in 1915, were intended to restore to the villages the lands illegally acquired by haciendas. Soon the policy was accepted of appropriating haciendas as outright grants of land (ejido) to the landless. A number of laws were enacted, often changed and more often not applied. For a long period, red tape and other delays were the rule before any ejido was finally given. The workers resident in haciendas *(peones acasillados)* were excluded from distribution of land until 1934, the beginning of the Cárdenas administration (1934-1940), during which the land reforms were speeded up and really enforced.

423 The outcome today is that the hacienda has been replaced by two types of ejido: the individual ejido in which every ejidatario receives a lot which he works by himself; and collective ejidos which are worked cooperatively. Collective ejidos were attempted in the 'twenties and a case in Michoacan has been described,[66] but the individual ejido has been the rule. Only during Cárdenas' period were collective ejidos set up in those areas where a highly commercial, large-scale exploitation prevailed in the production of foodstuffs or of raw materials for industry.

64. Tannenbaum, 1929; Simpson, 1937; Whetten, 1948.
65. This ejido is to be distinguished from the commons of colonial villages, also called ejido.
66. Simpson, 1937, Chap. xxv.

423 The individual ejido is a turn back to small exploitation. No technological improvements have been made, no credit is received from the Ejido Bank, and in some cases corn for subsistence is now grown instead of a former commercial crop. Collective ejidos, on the contrary, are financed by the Ejido Bank and are under its ultimate control. This is a good example of the state intervention in production which characterizes the present development of world economy.

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175 As stated when discussing the decline of the Indian village community in Michoacan, at the time of the Mexican Revolution, a number of haciendas were near the Tarascan region. Some villages had lost most of their lands and included great numbers of landless people. However, this is not typical of Tarascan villages. Most of them were and are villages of farmer-owners and craftsmen. Although most Tarascans had not lost lands to haciendas, private ownership of land prevailed and there was within the village noticeable inequality in wealth. Relatively large, medium and small landowners, sharecroppers, and landless laborers were to be found. In some towns outsiders owned a considerable amount of land. Consequently, the agrarian aspects of the Mexican Revolution, *i. e.*, the fight to get land from the haciendas, have been mainly external to most Tarascan villages, and the agrarian conflict caused by inequality within the village assumed here a peculiar form.

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No good information is available as to the extent to which Tarascans participated in the armed conflicts, although some fought with agrarian revolutionists (Zapatistas and Villistas). The land tenure situation is reflected in the extent to which agrarian reforms have been carried out. Villages near haciendas have received ejidos, but the other villages have not, although agrarian conflicts also arose.

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All the existing ejidos are of the individual type. In only one case (Tarajero) was collective exploitation attempted for some time. The people of Tarajero petitioned for land in 1915, and finally received it in 1924. It was good fertile land in a drained swamp, and, while part of former haciendas, the land had been used for commercial production. The agraristas decided to exploit it collectively. It seems, however, that the directing committee began to appropriate most of the profits derived from the exploitation, reducing the rest of the

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2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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ejidatarios to the level of underpaid laborers. ("The committee and its gang are living off the work of the rest of the people.") The upshot was that the ejidatarios managed to obtain from the government the abandonment of the cooperative exploitation and the distribution of the land into personal parcels. No further information is available.[67]

Ejidos were also granted on the southern shores of Lake Pátzcuaro. Here, ejidos were first established around 1920. Later on some were enlarged and new ones set up during the late 'thirties. Napízaro (originally granted 1936, enlarged 1938), Erongarícuaro (granted 1918, enlarged 1936), Uricho (granted 1920, actual possession given 1930, enlarged 1936), Santa Ana (1934), Tzurumútaro (granted 1921, possession given 1930, enlarged 1937), are among the main agrarista villages.[68] Other villages like Arócutin and Puácuaro have also agrarista groups but no information is available as to ejidos granted.

All these ejidos are individual. Lands are distributed to members by furrows, Tarascan style, and each individual lot is small (not more than 2 hectares). The tilling of the land is done individually, although laborers are sometimes employed. The main crops are corn, wheat, and beans. No credit has been received from the Bank of Ejido Credit. Woodlands are owned in common by the ejido. Its members can exploit them freely, but non-members have to pay a fee.[69]

In the Sierra and the Cañada towns there were no haciendas, and the granting of ejidos was not feasible. Only Tanaquillo in La Cañada had an ejido granted, in 1935.[70] In most villages, however, groups of peasants organized into agrarian committees in order to seize whatever lands they could — communal lands or those belonging to the richer landowners. These revolutionary groups formed armed guards by means of which they seized and kept power in their villages.[71]

In some towns like those in La Cañada, Charapan and Urapicho, a great number of farmers had lost their lands to richer neighbors or to outsiders. Haciendas had not been formed, but there were much absentee landownership and concentration of property. The people fought to get their lands back.[72]

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67. *Ibid.*, 477ff.
68. Mendieta y Núñez, 1940, 285–88.
69. *Ibid.*, 283–4.
70. *Ibid.*, 283.
71. *Ibid.*, 281; Sáenz, 1936, 23.
72. For Urapicho, Beals, 1946, 131.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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423 661 A similar case was going on in Ihuatzio. Here an agrarista group was formed and was trying to obtain the new shore lands, which, according to traditional use, should be distributed among all the villagers.

The opposition of the Church to the Revolution and the fact that the financing of the cult had been one of the factors that led many peasants to lose their lands [798] brought about a strong anticlerical policy among the agraristas, who expelled the priest and forbade the cult, particularly the festivals. This connection of the agrarian movement with religion will be further discussed in the next chapter.

423 668 578 175 Thus, in a small farmer-owner environment a new privileged minority was formed, which seized the lands of political enemies or of the community, assumed control of the town administration, and attacked long cherished cultural values related to religion and the church. The agraristas kept power by armed force, being organized into a local militia. Except in towns where a great majority benefited from the changes, strong opposition was always evident. During the late 'twenties there were in the area some groups of *cristeros*.[78] Cristeros were anti-agrarian peasants in revolt against the government because of its anti-church policy. The main regions of the cristero movements were those where small farmers prevailed and consequently agrarismo was weak.[79]

The political conflict became so intensified that by 1939 the government had to send small detachments of federal troops to many towns.[80] The presence of these forces undermined the control of the agrarista militia. Shortly afterwards the agraristas were driven out of some towns, new authorities were established, and the cult was again allowed to function.

At the time of our field work (1945) this movement against the agraristas had become strongly influenced by the *sinarquistas*.

668 *Sinarquismo* is a political movement strongly Catholic and nationalistic, opposed to the government and with such traits as a semi-military organization, rallies, and a peculiar salute and flag. It won its initial strength in the late 'thirties in the Bajio region near the Tarascans and gained considerable mass support among the artisans and peasants. To the peasants it plays upon the failure of the government to improve their lot. While accusing the government

78. Foster, 1948, 175.
79. For instance, Arandas: Taylor, 1933, 30-32, 36-39.
80. Beals, 1948, 112; Mendieta y Núñez, 1940, 289, 252.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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668 of stealing because it distributed the haciendas, it does not propagandize a return to the old order. It is supported by small farmers and even ejidatarios dissatisfied with the course of the land reforms. It promises the ejidatarios to rid them of the new bosses born of the Revolution and to give them as outright private property their ejido plots which now are ultimately owned by the State.

668 465 [452] Since the late 'thirties, the period when land reforms were more or less completed, the real wages in the countryside have been in decline[21] due mainly to wartime inflation. This fact together with the inability of the government to provide agricultural credit indicates the difficult situation of the countryside and explains the rapid growth of a protest movement like sinarquismo.[22]

669 The opposition to the agraristas and to the government which had arisen in many Tarascan towns has lately merged with sinarquismo. Sinarquista units function in many villages and many Tarascans are members of the party.

423 181 In the present situation, with the agrarian revolt receded, the Indian village communities, although greatly impaired, show a persistence of an economic foundation which is the basis for the survival of the

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21. Whetten, 1948, 262.
22. Gill, 1944; Padilla, 1948; Whetten, 1948, 484-522.

794 by commissioners (*comisionado, encargado*) named by the priest or the town council for a given task. In this case the time required is less and also the contributions, the expenses being met by the town or ward (barrio) and the commissioner acting as collector.

794 668 798 Changes in recent years have been, on the one hand, the rise of an anticlerical movement among the agraristas, aiming at suppressing the cult. On the other hand, in the conservative communities trying to preserve the cult, changes can be described in terms of the decline of the cabildo, increased intervention by the priest or town council, and the change from individual sponsor to commissioner.

* * *

The accumulation of causes giving rise to a movement against the organization of the cult and the cargos had thus been going on for a long period of time when the Mexican agrarian revolution began to be influential in Michoacan. The local participation of Tarascan villages in the movements for agrarian reform has been outlined in the previous chapter. The local agraristas became supporters of the national revolutionary governments from which they expected to receive lands. Both the national and the local situations also combined to produce an anticlerical policy on the part of the agraristas.

Social studies in Michoacan have been limited to peasant communities, and no good study is available on the haciendas and the cities. Consequently there is no good information as to the way in which the anticlerical policy of the government was evident in Michoacan. In Mexico at large the official Church has been connected with the traditional landowner class, which explains the anticlerical policies of the government. In Michoacan we can assume the same situation prevailed, for we know that the church here, too, opposed the government's agrarian reforms.[51] Anticlericalism appears on the one hand as the influence of governmental policies. On the other hand, the local situation is of paramount importance and only in those places where local conditions provided a basis for it has anticlericalism gained any stronghold.

[735] Financing the traditional cult had been the cause in many villages for Indian impoverishment and the loss of land to a few rich or to outsiders. This fact led the

51. Foster, 1948, 175.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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668 794 798 agrarista groups to identify the cult and the festivals with the land order against which they were revolting. Thus the local situation tied itself up with the national anticlerical policy of the government.

The agraristas kept the priest out of town and closed the church. If it had been burned during the Revolution they did not rebuild it,[52] or they used the church and the priest's house for other functions such as social centers or schools.[53] Cargos and fiestas were forbidden as they were seen to be the causes of excessive expenditures and drunkenness.[54]

We have already presented the causes for the failure of the agraristas to maintain their power in villages where small landowners prevailed. The agraristas became [565] an exclusive privileged minority, opposed to the interest of most of the villagers. Their anticlerical policies also led them to reforms in an aspect of culture—religion and festivals—which were deeply ingrained in the traditional culture. Resistance to their economic policies thus became associated with resistance to culture change. In such conservative villages, reaction against the agraristas was always prevalent,[55] and it had a militant Catholic ideology. Even during the period of the most strongly antichurch policy of the government, some villagers managed to hide a priest,[56] and others, like Cherán, smuggled one in to say mass in private houses without the anticlerical minority's being strong enough to dare speak.[57]

791 Still in other more conservative villages the lack of a priest led not to obsolescence of religion, but to manifestations of folk religion which the priests would not have allowed. In Ocumicho, a woman called María Doncella (Mary the Maiden) claimed to have heard the voice of God in a slit stone in a ravine near the village. The news spread throughout the region and many people began to come to Ocumicho in pilgrimage. María Doncella baptized the children herself and songs were made to her in which she was called the daughter of God. Once she said that the Virgin of Cocucho had come to Ocumicho and taken the patron San Pedro with her, and she organized a procession of people to go to Cocucho and pray to have San Pedro come back. According to skeptical informants

52. Urapicho: Beals, 1946, 131.
53. Tzurumútaro, Puácuaro.
54. Sáenz, 1936, 98; Simpson, 1937, 487.
55. Sáenz, 1936, *passim*; Foster, 1948, 175.
56. Tzintzuntzan: Foster, 1948, 175, 204.
57. Beals, 1946, 119.

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791 from Cocucho, her reputation and activities evaporated when in spite of her name she became pregnant.

668 Also, during this time of the government's limitation of priests, groups of
794 *cristeros*, in revolt against the government, operated in Michoacan.[58]

178 From about 1940, the agraristas lost control of many villages. They were able to stay in power only where they had been the majority. No study has been made of towns where the agraristas predominated. The communities studied are conservative and the agraristas were a minority. The study of Cherán[59] was made shortly after the agrarista group had been expelled. The author's field work was concentrated in a village where the anti-agrarista reaction was in power and had become affiliated with sinarquismo.

In describing the present economic situation we mentioned how the economic decline of the Indian communities is continuing in modern times. Since this economic decline was the cause for conflict in the sphere of the cult, the question naturally arises about the policy of this strongly religious reaction in regard to the old cargo system.

Following the success of the anti-agrarista reaction, the cult has again been allowed in villages where it had been forbidden, and fiestas are celebrated again, but there is no blooming again of the traditional cabildo; the decay of the old cargo system continues. Within the Catholic reaction to the agraristas we can see differences arising between more traditional and more modern elements; these differences are manifest in connection with religion and cargos.

Through the changes taking place in the political-religious organization, the cabildo became independent of the village civil administration, and, although connected with the priest, it arranged the festivals and the concession of sponsorships independently. As the organizer of the folk cult activities, it can be taken as the organization most purely representing the folk aspects of the local culture. It is in a position to resist national inroads on the folk culture either from the priest, who wants to change the festivals, or from the government, which wants to suppress the religious cult. As long as the elders have any political power within the community,

58. Foster, 1948, 175.
59. Beals, 1946.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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the cabildo is neither official nor related to the national or state government.

Correspondingly, there are people — we shall call them traditionalists — for whom religion means fundamentally the festivals to the saints, organized by the cargueros and the cabildo, and their meetings, inaugurations, and ceremonies. They speak of the need to continue the cargos and the fiestas and to resume the meetings of the cabildo. They even oppose the priests who attempt to suppress cargos or to modify the festivals, and they look down upon fellow villagers who do not care to take cargos, considering them unfit for leadership within the community.

These folk values are under attack by individuals who, although religious, are drifting away from the traditional organization and becoming closer to the Church. These may be called militant Catholics.

The trend is primarily against the cabildo as a clique of those who, through wealth and age, have passed through the cargos and reached eldership, and try to control cult organization. Also, the individual sponsorship as practiced by the cabildo included heavy expenses in connection with presents and banqueting for cabildo members. The trend is toward less drunkenness and toward making sponsorship less expensive.

The changes in organization cause the cult to be more strictly dependent on either the Church or the town government, i. e., on local branches of national institutions as against the former almost purely locally organized cabildo.

Thus to some extent the conflict appears as one between the priest and the conservative cabildo. The priest, of course, tries to lead the natives into more orthodox practices so that he attempts to suppress some of the folk customs and excessive drunkenness. The basic point is that he is only the incentive and leading force for those town elements who want the changes themselves.

The initiative often comes from the townspeople, from those whom we called militant Catholics. In Cherán some of the people organized a town meeting to ask that the cabildo be suppressed because of the excessive gifts they demanded from those aspiring to sponsorship, because their festivals and meetings were occasions for drunkenness, and because they stole from the church (a discussion having arisen as to the use the cabildo made of

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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668 178 794 the presents given for church support during the years when priests were lacking). They wanted the cargos to be requested directly from the priest. The outcome was not clear at the time of Beals' study, although the future of the cabildo did not seem very promising, since the priest was opposed to it.[60]

[793] In Jarácuaro, where there was no resident priest at the time of our work, the leading sinarquistas were against becoming cargueros because of the expenses involved and because they did not consider this necessary to be good Catholics. Some old men said they should accept cargos before associating with the elders "because they haven't done anything for the village." The fact was, however, that their help and advice were always requested by the local authorities.

Comparing more conservative communities such as Angahuan or the pre-revolutionary Chilchota[61] with Cherán, it is seen that the cabildo gradually loses its rôle as the main organizer of the folk religion and, although surviving, becomes only one mayordomía or group of mayordomías similar to the others. Participation in the cabildo mayordomía as the prerequisite for eldership disappears, as does the elders' rôle of granting sponsorships. Its importance as organizer of the priest's household and caretaker of the church building depends on how much a given priest relies on them.[62] The trend seems to be toward a situation similar to that in Tzintzuntzan, where the old hospital organization has already disappeared.[63]

[656] In some cases the new civil authorities intervene in the organization of festivals. On the one hand, this could be taken as a reunion of Church and State in the local sphere, for the new civil authorities assume religious functions. The feeling still prevails that every man should take a cargo and do something for the town before becoming an officer, and this is being transferred to a new system of local government. To the extent that the folk culture survives, this trend might be expected to continue. The new authorities work in close connection with the priest and mayordomías for a new organization more suited to the changing environment and economic situation than is the old-fashioned cabildo.

60. *Ibid.*, 134 ff.
61. *Ibid.*, 143-44, 215-19.
62. *Ibid.*, 118.
63. Foster, 1948, 201-202.

668 178 794 On the other hand, the intervention of the civil authorities reflects increasing secularization of the main festivals. It takes place in those festivals wherein the non-church celebration is of more importance and of more entertainment and commercial value. The most typical folk festivals, such as the patron saint's fiesta and Corpus Christi, are organized by the town officials as a secular affair aside from the day's religious celebration.[64]

178 794 The trend of change is not only to shift control from the cabildo to either the priest or the town government. A change in the way of organizing a given festival is also involved. This is done by recourse to another method used of old but only lately gaining strength. Instead of individual sponsorship in which the sponsor takes care of all or most of the expense, joint financing by the whole community is used; and instead of the carguero sponsor, there [624] is a commissioner, named by the town council or the priest; his contributions are small and he organizes the festival and collects contributions from the villagers. Also, different commissioners are named, to divide the preparation of the festival. This new system is called *comisionado* in Cherán[65] or *encargado* in Tzintzuntzan.[66]

This change has taken place in Tzintzuntzan: the cargueros of La Soledad Church and of the Guadalupe Chapel have been replaced by encargados with fewer duties and less financial responsibility than formerly.[67]

A commissioner system is used today in Cherán for the festival of the patron saint, Corpus Christi, and its Octave,[68] but no information is available as to how the cargueros went out of offce. In Huáncito (a Cañada town) the change in organization for the town's saint took place when resuming the festival after the period of agrarista suppression of the cult.

The decline of the cabildo also involves the cessation of its meetings with the banqueting, music, and drunkenness which were an important part of the ceremonies attended by cargueros. The ceremonies attendant to the change of officials, important in the past, also disappear.

This does not mean, however, the end of the carguero system. As long as some people can accumulate property, the folk culture is still sufficiently strong that individ-

64. Beals, 1946, 120-127; Foster, 1948, 204ff, 215ff.
65. Beals, 1946, 106, 120.
66. Foster, 1948, 196, 198.
67. *Ibid.*, 198, 200-201.
68. Beals, 1946, 120, 126, 127.

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794 178 uals can be found to sponsor festivals. The fact remains, though, that the opposite tendency making for decay of the mayordomías seems to be stronger.

794 In spite of the changes devised to preserve the festivals and the desire to continue them, the old fact of their being an economic burden still continues. During the short time when the field work for the Tarascan project was done, a number of fiestas were not celebrated because nobody was available to see to the expenses or because of the current conflict between the cargueros and the priest. Thus in Cherán, 1940, dances for Santa Nieves, the Virgin of Guadalupe, and the pastorela of the shepherdesses were not celebrated.[69] In Tzintzuntzan, the cargueros of La Soledad were not functioning since the priest had suppressed them in 1942.[70] The festival of the patron saint failed in Jaracuaro in 1945 because of lack of enough sponsors.

The new commissioner who substitutes for the old carguero can find his duty too much like that of his predecessor, his contribution being too high. In Cherán in 1940, one of the four commissioners named by the town officials to act as Moro dancers avoided the performance and only three Moros danced.[71]

● 668 794 178 This new trend away from folk festivals and toward a closer dependence on the priest is, therefore, also one toward both more orthodox Catholicism and secularization of the festivals. It finds more ready support among the villagers who have become associated with sinarquismo, and whose relation to the Church is close and similar to that of allegiance to a political party. Conversely, the priest often supports and fosters the spread of sinarquismo among the townspeople. Not only does he attack the old organization of cargueros and try to have a new one under his control, but he uses their influence to attack the government and schools, and to support the sinarquista schools and propaganda.[72]

* * *

The economic developments of the Indian communities outlined in Chapter 2 have been causing the disruption of folk cult celebrations because of the economic burden of their financing.

In connection with the agraristas, a radical trend for change arises which, spurred by the cult rôle in the impoverishment of

69. *Ibid.*, 138, 175, 149.
70. Foster, 1948, 198.
71. Beals, 1946, 121.
72. Foster, 1948, 175, 184-185, 193.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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668 178 794 some villagers and by the anticlerical policy of the government, aims at abolishing the cult. But as in the economic sphere, this movement does not succeed in making change permanent because of the survival of the villages' economic foundation and their folk culture. There is a return to the cult, although the economic situation forces changes in its organization: decline of the body of the folk officers (cabildo); increased control by the priest; abolition of some folk ceremonies; organization of the main festivals by the civil administration as secular affairs; change from organization by an individual sponsor (carguero) carrying all the financial burden, to that of a number of commissioners sharing in the organization and the collection of contributions from the whole community. The decline of folk festivals and the greater control by the priest lead to a more orthodox Catholicism, and the influence of sinarquismo, in which allegiance to the

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Church is of a political nature, brings the local subculture closer to the national culture. These changes show the trend through which the folk religion might disappear completely (lack of cult sponsors, control by the priests, or the success of the anticlericals), but the simplification of ceremonials and the new forms of organization are also a means by which the folk religion survives, on an organizational basis better suited to the changed economic and social order. As in economics, the basic traits of the village community survive. A stable situation, however, is not reached. Conflict continues, because of the same forces which caused the changes described: the economic impossibility or unattractiveness of the festivals, and the ceremonials under attack by the priest. These trends go on disrupting the folk culture, but they are not strong enough to break it completely. As in economics, a state of latent conflict continues.

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well dressed non-Indian (*catrín*). The traditional sponsorship of religious festivals (*cargos*) also disrupts the social order in the villages because of their rôle in impoverishing the sponsors. The Devil steps in to get the carguero's soul by providing the money he needs to hold the festival. The folk value of cargos prevails, however, as the saint proceeds to save the carguero.

In so far as Tarascan religion is part of the national religion, a certain national social order and certain institutions are also supported. Adherence to the priest and to the dictates of the Church indicates such an endorsement of the church's national rôle and the social order which it supports. The moment there are anticlerical groups considered devilish because of their opposition to the Church, the whole weight of this body of belief is brought against them.

Similarly, defense of property, which in terms of local culture is defense of small property, can become support of a national order based on large property (as in the story defending the hacienda owner). Sanction of poverty can mean defense of the Indian way of life against intrusion, but viewed nationally, unequal distribution of wealth is sanctioned by virtue of poverty and the social order based on it.

Tarascan ideology, then, sanctions the traditional folk culture, but conflict with the outside is evident, and the fact that the folk culture is part of a wider society means that a certain national order is also sanctioned.

B. SUPERNATURAL SANCTIONS IN SOCIAL CONFICT

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In previous chapters we have examined the agrarista movement and its anticlerical character. This anticlericalism resulted on the one hand in the agrarista's connection with the national anticlerical government from which he expected to receive lands, and in the opposition met in the Church itself, which was nationally opposed to the agrarian reforms. On the other hand, the main local cause for the agrarista anticlericalism was the cargo system for the local cult organization, which exacted too much from the Indians and was in many cases responsible for the loss of their lands.

We also gave the reasons for opposition to the agraristas and for their decline in villages where small landowners prevailed, and the following success of the Catholic reaction. Within this reaction the trend

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against the traditional cargo system is again discernible, although this time under the cloak of a more orthodox Catholicism. Thus people are divided according to their appreciation of some cultural institution: for cargos (traditionalist) or against them (agraristas and some militant Catholics); for the Church (traditionalists and militant Catholics) or aganist it (agraristas).

Since the ethical religious ideology sanctions those institutions thus in conflict, let us see how supernatural sanction of political groups is evidenced in folk narratives.

Corresponding to the general anti-agrarista trend, we find in the tales use of the good and evil theme in order to prove the wickedness of the agraristas. A number of experiences in which people see the Devil take place in towns where the agraristas dominate, doubtless a reflection of the connection between the two evils.

At the time of our stay in Jarácuaro, the level of the lake was falling, leaving considerable extensions of land dry. At that time in Ihuatzio, which is strongly Catholic, an agrarista group was formed to get this land for themselves instead of sharing it with the whole town. News soon reached Jarácuaro that the Devil had been seen in Ihuatzio. The following market day in Pátzcuaro brought more complete news:

"In Ihuatzio they saw the Devil. He came out of the mountains and he crossed the town through the center. He looked like a human, but had feet like those of donkeys. The people wanted to hit him, but they were not able to reach him. They say he came out because many have now become agraristas. In order to get the land at the lakeshore the town has split."

A similar story is told of another town:

"This is what happened to a man from Tócuaro when agrarismo was so powerful. This man remembered an errand he had to do at Pichátaro and he left; this was about eleven o'clock at night. He went down right to the road and there he saw a man on horseback. They greeted each other: 'Good evening.' 'Good evening.' 'Where are you going?' 'To Pichátaro.' 'I am going to Puácuaro. Shall we travel together?' 'All right. Let's go.'

"'Where do you come from?' the stranger asked. 'I come from Tócuaro, and you?' 'Well, I am here and there, sometimes in Tzurumútaro, sometimes in San Pedro, San Bartolo or Puácuaro; those are the towns where they like me best.' 'And what about Tócuaro?' 'No, you don't like me at all; you have there an old

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539 man who does not let me in.' [This is Saint Francis.] And the man from Tócuaro did not realize whom he was talking with. So they arrived at Arócutin where their roads separated and the stranger asked: 'Don't you want a cigarette?' 'Yes.' 'Here it is.' And when he lit the cigarette the man from Tócuaro saw his eyes which seemed to be burning, so bright they were. He threw the cigarette away and left. He had only walked a few steps when fright caught him. His hands and feet were sweating and he left the road and spent the night in the open. He did not arrive at Pichátaro until the next day and then he told what had happened to him."

668 776 San Bartolo, San Pedro, Tzurumútaro and Puácuaro are agrarista towns on the lakeshore; the Devil is welcome there. In Tócuaro, however, they are not agraristas; they follow their patron saint (Saint Francis), and the Devil cannot get in.

Similarly, in Tzurumútaro, another agrarista town, "there appeared an old woman who used to talk to men on the street corners. When she left she went to a ravine. She was a devil."

In Huecorio 'the Enemy' (euphemism for the Devil) came out one night roaring like a bull. The dogs went after him and he became a black dog dragging something like a long skin. He appeared one night after the church had been blessed and mass had been said for the first time. This was three years ago (*i. e.*, 1942).

Agraristas are also mentioned in an experience of a man who, having come back to life after being dead for a few hours, reports having seen in hell the place prepared for burning the agraristas working the land in Copujo, Jarácuaro.

In one incantation, the spirits of the agrarista leader, Zapata, and the revolutionary bandit, Chávez García, are mentioned as bad spirits whose help is asked: "You brave spirits, which are now in the other life. Now, in this moment, come to me. You, spirits of Chávez García and Zapata."

In the following story, the supporter of the Church is miraculously saved from the agraristas:

539 "At the time when the priests were being persecuted, there was a man who defended the church very much. Nobody did anything to him; he was not burned nor anything. The agraristas put him in jail. He had spent three days in jail, and they wanted to convince him that if he would go on defending the Church

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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539 they were going to kill him, but if he did not, they would let him free. He said they had better kill him. So they were going to kill him. They told him: 'Tomorrow we are going to kill you; make up your mind.' And he said he had already made up his mind. It was night. An angel came and opened the doors. The man was asleep and the angel told him: 'Come, then. Get out.' So the man went out after him and he walked through where the soldiers were and not even one woke up. Next day the light broke out and the soldiers went to kill him and nobody was there and everything was locked up tight. Our Lord Saint Peter had left him on the outskirts of Rome. He went into the city and when the call for mass struck there he was. He heard the mass and he told the Pope everything that had happened, and the Pope said, 'Right now in your town they want to kill the soldiers because they did not pay attention. I am going to send word that you are here, not to kill them.' So, they did not kill them."

[668] [823] The anti-agrarista theme appears important in the talés about the Parícutin volcano.[2]

"At that time there were many agraristas. One man from Corupo spoke to a man from Parícutin, to another from San Juan, to still another from Zácán, and to a fourth from Zirosto. They got together and said, 'Let us go and steal the Holy Sacrament.' They went to San Juan and took it out from the church. And in the whole town only one man noticed that the Holy Sacrament was no longer there, but he was afraid of saying so lest the people blame him. He noticed on three days during mass that the Holy Sacrament was not there and at last he told some friends whom he trusted. The agraristas took the Holy Sacrament to Zacán and they wondered what to do with it. They spent some days in Zacán; then they went to Zirosto, and finally they took it to Parícutin in order to hide it. The owner of a land plot there was an agrarista, and he said, 'Well, as you don't know what to do with it, let us take it to my plot.' And they hid it there.

"And the Eternal God said, 'What shall I do with those people? They are the most wicked in the world. I don't know what to do with them.'

"Then the Devil appeared and said, 'There is a way.' 'How?' 'Sure, there is a way so that they shall suffer, but they will not be the only ones to suffer.' Then God said, 'Go then, but let me think it over for a month.' The Devil asked for too much, but at last they drew the line within

2. Tarascan stories about the volcano have been discussed by the author in a previous paper (Carrasco, 1946).

539 which the people had to suffer. Then God gave His permission and the Devil made the volcano at once."

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"In the plain where the volcano burst forth there was a cross which the missionary fathers had buried because there was a danger in that plain. A man from Paricutin was working that land; when he was plowing he saw the cross. He did not approve of it, he called a friend, dug, and took an arm from the cross; he chopped it off. Inside was a golden cross to keep the volcano from breaking forth. They took it out and broke a wooden cross which was on top of the golden one and the agraristas burned it. Then the volcano erupted. They say that because the people from Paricutin were so bad and broke the cross, the volcano broke out. Before the volcano broke out, little figures were seen dancing, city-clothed people (*catrines*), and also four whirlwinds. Dionisio was getting close and felt the earth was hot so he said, 'Now it is going to break out; I better go.' And he heard a noise, *fu*! and smoke came out. When he arrived home it was already roaring."

• • • •

"Once when the people of Paricutin had a land dispute with those of San Juan, a priest had told the people to gather a lot of money and bury it there. So he put the money and on top of it a cross and he blessed it because he said that to him who hurt the cross or took the money out, God would send a punishment. Some agraristas felled the cross with an axe and took the money. Shortly thereafter the volcano broke out. And that is the reason."

• • • •

"The volcano appeared because the agraristas from Paricutin had felled a cross which had Holy Hosts inside. The cross was placed by a missionary father that same year so that no water snake [tornado] would fall there. They felled it and, the day after, the volcano was there."

668 798 538 The political conflict and the agrarista anticlericalism have thus produced an increase in the use of some themes of the traditional religious ideology, namely those which point out the wickedness of the people who oppose the Church and the cult.

On the subject of cargos the folk ideology maintains that they are necessary in order to enter heaven. However, we did not find this belief elaborated upon by the more traditional people in opposition to the militant Catholics who reject the car-

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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668 798 538 gos.' Conversely, the militant Catholics do not seem to use folk ideas in order to argue their stand; we simply find disbelief in the idea that the cargos have supernatural sanctions. These Catholics are supported by their priest who holds the same views.

Full agrarista material is lacking, for our collection was gathered in conservative villages. A volcano story was told by an agrarista from Charapan who had taken refuge in Cocucho. The tale demonstrates belief in religion and clearly condemns fiestas, making them the cause for the volcano, instead of blaming the agraristas as do most other stories. The agrarista policy of suppressing fiestas finds in this story a neat ideological justification:

539 "A bearded man appeared near San Juan before the eruption had started. He found a cowboy and asked him, 'Where are you going?' 'I am looking for some oxen,' he said. 'Well, haven't you seen them where you have been?' 'No, I have not.' 'Well, look here. After all, nobody is going to take them. I want you to do an errand for me. There is a hole back there where you were. Go and step on it and you will find a man. Tell him that I need him.'

"The cowboy went there, but the hole was too small to get into, so he went back to tell the bearded man. 'Sure you can get in,' he replied. 'You just step hard on it.' The boy did so and he sank. He arrived at a big house, where he told the man there what he was ordered to say: 'A bearded man sends me to tell you that he needs you.' 'What is the matter, then?' 'I don't know. I was looking for some animals when he found me and sent me on this errand.' 'Let's go then.'

"And they went out and they arrived where the bearded man was. He said that he wanted this man from the underworld to destroy the town of San Juan before the time came for the fiesta. 'But I cannot do that!' 'Sure, you can. You must destroy the town before the holy day so that no fiesta will be made.' And so they left, and the cowboy left, too, and he found the oxen where the bearded man had told him.

The bearded man was God and the other one was the Devil. God didn't want any more fiestas in San Juan, because the poor people went there and spent so much money because everything was very expensive. Besides, they were robbed even within the Church, and so the poor people were left without any money at all. That's why God destroyed everything."

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4. It should be noted that no particular effort was made to obtain them. Neither, however, was an effort made to get the anti-agrarista motives which so often appeared.

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668 538 Not enough data are available for us to say whether or not stories of this type are as common among the agraristas as the anti-agrarista motifs are frequent among the opposite party. The existing material suggests that such is not the case. Agrarista informants tell the same stories and experiences as the more conservative informants, whose stories sanction folk culture values. Their political position shows rather in the attitude with which they tell the story, one of disbelief.

* * *

771 538 Tarascan religious ideas and folklore sanction the Church and the proper observance of the cult, both in their local (folk culture) and national aspects.

The stories and case histories collected show an abundant use of religious motifs to point out the wickedness of the anti-clerical agraristas. Those stories are told from the point of view of the traditional folk culture. The militant Catholics who are partly in conflict with that folk culture also tell such stories, for they attack their agrarista adversaries and sanction allegiance to the Church with which they are closely connected. In that aspect (cargos) in which they oppose the traditional folk culture, they do not use religious motifs except in that they support the priest who denies the need for this activity. Their attitude is one of lack of belief in those traditional ideas which sanctioned the sponsorship of festivals. They, like the agraristas, show a lack of belief in the traditional concepts of folk religion.

The Ideology of the Folk Religion in Decline: Attitudes of Belief

771 The social content of the religious ideology having been examined, we can now discuss how the change in this ideology is expressed in different belief attitudes which consequently involve changes in the meaning, use and function of a given religious concept or myth. We shall find different attitudes as to belief, and we shall try to correlate them with the economic and political tendencies discussed in previous chapters. We shall see how the breaking down of a folk religion involves a change from total belief in the content of the folk religious concepts and myths, towards skepticism, disbelief, and acceptance of outside (national) opinions. This change is not gradual and uniform, but results in extreme attitudes which can be

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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771 correlated with the different parties in the political conflict.

In the previously presented outline of that part of the religious ideology which is related to the concepts of good and evil, the material was arranged by the author and discussed as though it were a single body of opinion, attitude, and beliefs. Actually, what any single Indian knows and believes is not so well integrated. In reality there are great differences in the kind of material any one individual knows and is able to supply. A discussion of variability in folklore could be made in terms of individual participation in this aspect of culture; the different individuals' knowledge of folklore could be related to sex, age, status, personality, and other factors. Such a discussion is not attempted in this paper.

One also finds great variability in the
538 attitude toward the folklore material any one particular individual knows. This has already been pointed out in discussing types of narratives. What to one informant may be a true happening which God allowed to take place so that men can learn how to behave, to another is a fictitious story told for fun. What some tell as powerful and true manifestations of the supernatural, others tell jokingly as something which superstitious people do and believe.

These different belief attitudes are re-
771 lated to folk and national levels of culture
668 (particularly in religion), and to the social and political groups described in previous chapters.

We have been describing the change processes in terms of three main tendencies: (1) the traditionalist — following and advocating strict adherence to the values of traditional folk culture, even to the extent of opposing the priest; (2) the agrarista (agrarian reformer)—anticlerical and the most closely connected with policies of the national government; and (3) the militant Catholic. The last, reacting against the economic and religious agrarista policies, but partially in conflict themselves with the traditional folk culture, tend to follow a more orthodox Catholicism, and in national politics, connect themselves with the Church and the sinarquista movement.

In the ideological realm, as to the question of how much people believe in the content of their folk religion, we can also describe three attitudes which correspond to the above socio-political tendencies: (1) Correlated with the traditionalist group is an attitude characterized by total belief in

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771 the folk religion and the content of folk-
668 lore. Most people, however, show a certain degree of disbelief. Among some (2) this goes with criticism of the Church and with the acceptance of the rational point of view taught in school. This attitude can be correlated with the agrarista position in politics. Among many people (3) some items of lore and religion are doubted or dismissed but always under the acceptance of basic religious tenets and of Church authority. The trend is thus towards a greater orthodoxy within Catholicism, by abandoning beliefs of the purely folk level. This is paralleled by the militant Catholic position in politics.

These three attitudes are ideal types in terms of which we describe individual behavior. In reality they are not necessarily pure nor does every individual connected with a particular political tendency have in every way the attitude which we correlate with that tendency. Individual differences are determined not only by political affiliation but also by personality and cultural participation in general.

771 In order better to see the balance of change we will discuss first the traditionalist position. This represents the folk culture point of view of the village community.

In the formal aspects of religion, the more conservative, traditionalist individuals or towns attach greater importance to private rituals like those connected with agriculture or witchcraft. Also, the religion based on the folk cult of the saints is the most important. These people insist on the need to continue cargos and fiestas. They oppose the priests who attempt to change this and scorn Catholics who do not care for cargos. In the field of belief, total belief in religious concepts and tales corresponds to the above attitudes. Cargos are believed to be a way of serving God and the saints, necessary to reach heaven.

[773] Myths are believed. Experiences with the supernatural are told as true happenings and even wonder stories are supposed to be true.

A few examples will illustrate this attitude:

539 **Maximino tells how he has seen the Devil on two occasions, once as a woman and another time as a donkey. Once he discovered an attempt to bewitch him and in another case he caught a witch who had taken the shape of an owl. Once a heavy plank fell on him while he was building a house. He became unconscious**

771 the boy leaves, BA eats it and says, 'What an
[539] easy life, that of a sorcerer.'

This basic trend of change is found in
771 both convinced agraristas and militant
Catholics, but there are also differences
178 which warrant a discussion.
668 The disbelief attitude is sometimes pushed to an extreme, including doubt as to religion, the authority of the Church, and the need for the cult. We saw how the agraristas identified fiestas with the social order they attacked, and tried to suppress them and the cult completely. A critical position toward religion and the Church is also found among some people who have been subjected to outside influence, including sometimes outside education, and whose political ideas would be called 'radical' although they are not directly connected with local agrarista policies. This can be considered direct national influence.

178 These people scorn the others as super-
771 stitious, fanatics, fools. Myths or experiences with the supernaturals are not believed and are told as something some people do or believe. The language used by Leandro in describing how the people of Cocucho thought their Virgin was weeping tears of blood is typical:

[539] "... And as in this town there are a lot
[781] of superstitious people, the following day ... the woman praying the rosary began shouting and crying as the Virgin was weeping tears of blood because Saint Peter had left ... And what really happened was that the wind waved the red paper hangings used as ornaments in the church and they were reflected on the image of the Virgin."

771 For the militant Catholics, agraristas
668 are nothing but atheists. They describe them as people who have no religion, as is proved by the fact that they close the churches, ban the priests, and deal sacrilegiously with sacred objects, even destroying and burning the images of the saints.

Negation of the existence of God was recorded by an informant in Arócutin, but we do not have enough material to say to what extent this position obtains. More material from towns preponderantly agrarista is necessary before we can know to what extent lack of belief in the basic teachings of the Church arose in part locally or is due only to the fact that this group has been more under the direct

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668 influence of the Government and its anti-Church policies.

In another agrarista informant, we find also the attitude that the saints are good but the priests are bad. This Ichan informant, although an agrarista, advised the people to hide the saints when he learned that the agraristas of other Cañada towns were coming to burn them.

The available material suggests that in the agrarista party, we would find among some people (mainly those with more outside connections and education) opinions approximating almost complete lack of belief in God, the saints, and dogmas of the Church, although perhaps believing in witchcraft. Some others would oppose the Church and the priests for political reasons but keep withal a fair amount of belief. This would compare with the existence of both traditionalists and modern tendencies in the Catholic reaction against the agraristas.

The fact remains, however, that among some people the trend away from folk religion goes with opposition to the Church and lack of belief in it. Just the opposite is observed among the militant Catholics.

The dominant milieu in most Tarascan towns — including Jarácuaro where most of this material comes from — was formed in the struggle against the agraristas. This reaction we have described as not uniform but embracing both the more conservative people, who are decidedly for the folk culture values, and the more modern, in part opposed to the folk culture, who have lately come under the influence of the sinarquista party. It is this more modern tendency within the Catholic movement which we will briefly characterize here. In it the folk ideology is in decadence, but, for political reasons, people in this group are strongly religious both in allegiance to the Church and in belief.

These are two extreme positions. It is not possible to fit every individual into one or the other group, as many people are not politically active, and both groups work together against the agraristas. They both favor religion. Differences occur when those of the more 'modern' point of view try to change the fiestas and cargos, and follow the priest who also wants to change the folk religion better to fit Catholic orthodoxy. The position against cargos among leading sinarquistas in Jarácuaro has been mentioned before. This position

771 is seen not only in their behavior but also in the fact that their ideas about cargos
668 are changing. Whereas for the traditionalist, cargos are a necessary service to God
[782] in order to reach heaven, some Catholics oppose this idea. They say it is only custom, an unnecessary expenditure of money, not required to be a good Catholic, and they are supported by the priest. When discussing this point, Manuel has a ready argument: "Do you have cargos in Mexico City? You don't have them there, but people are still good Catholics."

[773] Myths and experiences with the supernatural are usually believed, and sometimes even wonder stories, but the attitude of doubt described before is also found.

Although agraristas or radicals dismiss folk beliefs as superstitions, the prevalent pattern by which folk beliefs disappear is not through lack of belief but by some sort of explanation within the accepted ideology as to why behavior based on the disappearing belief is not found any more. Thus we see in belief the same trend as in the cult, where the tendency is toward a more orthodox Catholicism. Examples follow:

539 In Zopoco there are no rich men because the town Christ "does not allow the *japíngua* to operate", *i. e.*, compacts with the Devil.

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754 Jarácuaro used to be famous as a center of witchcraft. Prospective witches entered a cave
778 behind the Church to make a compact with the Devil and learn their art. The present lack
538 of witches is attributed to the fact that the entrance to the cave has been covered: "Formerly there were witches because God allowed it. Now he stopped it. What there are now are some magicians who learn in books, but God does not allow many of them. Otherwise with so many books as there are, there would be many magicians and all of them would be causing evil."

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776 Elves are no longer seen because the Pope
539 condemned them together with other devils to go back to hell; and they have not been seen thereafter.

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821 In Cocúcho there were many thunderstorms
539 over a certain mountain. "A priest went and
783 blessed a cave in the mountain. A thunderstorm destroyed the cave. They said many people were seen leaving the mountain; they

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783 were crying and saying people did not care for them any more; they went to Tierra Caliente."

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[778] "Nowadays a dead man's finger is no longer good. In olden times it was useful because miracles still were possible. Now it is all finished, or maybe they were saints? Who knows?"

668 In this Catholic group, the people who have the most contacts with the outside world are not, like the agraristas, those more closely related to the government or school, but those who attend sinarquista rallies even as far away as Morelia or Guadalajara, or send boys to study for the priesthood. Like the agraristas, they are more closely connected with national life than the traditionalists, but they represent a different kind of allegiance to national institutions.

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771 The folk culture of the Tarascan communities has been characterized economically and socially and the main traits of the folk religion have been described. To the extent that the local communities have an economic and social life independent of the external world, an ideology of its own is typical of the folk culture. It is associated mainly with unorganized religion and the celebration and organization of the local Catholic cult. To the extent that the local community is part of a wider society

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178 182 greater acceptance of outside authority in questions of ideology. Also the institutions, such as sponsorships of festivals, sanctioned by the folk ideology, were now against the interests of people within the community.

178 668 The former forces of change led to conflict within the villages incited by the Mexican Revolution and subsequent agrarian reforms. Different political trends became discernible within the villages and the people in them had different religious aspirations and policies.

Agrarista groups were formed. In Mexico agraristas are peasants who receive land (usually from former haciendas) under the terms of the agrarian reforms. Such groups exist in some Tarascan villages which were close to haciendas, but in the conservative villages studied, agraristas are groups within the village, organized to take over lands which had been lost to outsiders, or which either belonged to larger landowners within the village or were communal property. In religion they aim at abolishing the cult. They particularly forbid the sponsorship and celebration of festivals, for they see in them the cause for the loss of their lands. Consequently the body of officers organizing those festivals is also suppressed. Belief in God and the saints may be kept and folk narratives are still told which express the old local community values but there is a considerable lack of belief in an ideology which sanctions what they oppose, including the Church. Some can be easily convinced by the anti-religious teachings of outside radicals.

In the conservative communities studied, since the agraristas formed a privileged minority, a reaction arose which finally prevailed. This reaction suppressed the privileges of the agraristas, gained control of the local government, and restored the cult. Within this reaction two trends in religious policies can be discerned. One group, which might be called traditionalist, favors following the cult as of old with the earlier system of sponsorships and a revival of the political and social importance of the sponsors within the community. In ideology it correlates with total belief in

178 668 the content of folklore and this folklore is used to prove agrarista wickedness.

The other group which seems to prevail is more closely connected with the Church politically. This group restores the cult but the old causes for decline of the folk religion are seen in their policy. They sometimes oppose individual sponsorships and attendant celebrations. New forms are used for organizing and financing festivals through the cooperation of all villagers. The folk cult tends to come under stricter control of the priest (tending towards greater orthodoxy) or of the civil authorities (towards secularization of the celebration). In the realm of ideology there is lack of belief in part of the folk ideas, but a basic belief and acceptance of the Church authority are kept. In belief, as in the celebrations of the cult, a more orthodox Catholicism is evident.

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One can see clearly the forces of change which might lead to the almost complete disappearance of the folk religion: lack of sponsors for folk festivals and a consequent decline in the festivals, some disappearing and others becoming secular affairs; lack of belief in folk narratives, leading to obsolescence or to their becoming non-religious narratives; and acceptance of outside anti-clerical policies or of strict Church control in questions of religion. But as long as the economic basis of the communities persists, some amount of folk religion will also survive. The extremist anticlerical position of the agraristas could not take root. The present Catholic reaction against them represents the balance of change, effecting neither complete disappearance of the folk religion nor a preservation of the old order. Nevertheless, the old factors for change continue in operation. The conflict between conservative and disruptive tendencies goes on and a stable integration can not be attained.

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Throughout this process of change the interplay of local and national factors is all the time evident. The changing folk culture of a local community can be understood only by relating the trends arising out of local conditions to the development of the nation of which the folk community forms a part.